

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 /147 W

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R 251140Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6350

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 7310

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV,PFOR, MOPS, PINS, LA

SUBJECT: SOUVANNA DOES NOT EXPECT EARLY FORMATION
OF NEW GOVERNMENT

1. ON OCTOBER 24, PRIME MINISTER SUMMONED DCM DEAN TO OBTAIN BRIEFING ON SISOUK'S OCTOBER 15-17 CONVERSATIONS IN WASHINGTON. PRIME MINISTER WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO HEAR PRAISE EXPRESSED BY THE SECRETARY AND OTHER TOP AMERICAN OFFICIALS FOR HIS SUCCESSFULL COMPLETION OF PROTOCOL NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR ASSURANCES OF CONTINUED AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR LAOS AND THE PRIME MINISTER.

2. SOUVANNA THEN DISCUSSED CHANGE IN ATMOSPHERE WHICH HAD OCCURED IN VIENTIANE OVER LAST 3-4 WEEKS SINCE PHOUMI VONGVICHIT RETURNED TO SAM NEUA. HE DEPLORED LPF'S REFUSAL TO ACTIVATE THE JCIA WHICH HAD FORCED HIM TO CANCEL AUTHORIZATION FOR ARRIVAL OF ADDITIONAL LPF PERSONNEL. SOUVANNA EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD SOME INDICATIONS THAT LPF LEADERSHIP IN SAM NEUA WAS DIVIDED ON POLICY TO BE PURSUED IN IMPLEMENTING AGREEMENT AND FORMING NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT. HE CLAIMED THAT IN THIS POLICY DEBATE LPF HARD-LINERS SUCH AS KAYSONE AND NOUHAKE ARE
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PITTED AGAINST SOUVANOUVONG AND PHOUMI AND THEIR

FAILURE TO AGREE ACCOUNTS FOR LPF'S PRESENT STALLING TACTICS. SOUVANNA SAID THAT LPF'S UNJUSTIFIED CRITICISM OF RLG'S SHORTCOMINGS IN MAKING AVAILABLE APPROPRIATE HOUSING AND TRANSPORT FACILITIES FOR LPF IS MERELY SUBTERFUGE AND THAT REAL REASON FOR DELAY IS INTERNAL STRUGGLE IN LPF CENTRAL COMMITTEE WHETHER AND HOW TO PROCEED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEPTEMBER 14 PROTOCOL.

3. SOUVANNA SAID HE PLANS IN NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS TO SEND TELEGRAM TO HIS BROTHER SOUPHANOUVONG URGING HIM TO RETURN PHOUMI VONGVICHIT VIENTIANE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL. SOUVANNA SAID THAT SO LONG AS NO VALID LPF INTERLOCUTOR IS IN VIENTIANE, HE EXPECTS LITTLE PROGRESS IN IRONING OUT PROBLEMS HOLDING UP FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT.

4. PRIME MINISTER ALSO CONFIRMED WHAT PHENG HAD TOLD US EARLIER, THAT HE WOULD NOT SUBMIT SEPTEMBER PROTOCOL AND FEBRUARY AGREEMENT TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR APPROVAL AS LONG AS HE HAD NOT RECEIVED LIST OF LPF MINISTERS. HE DID NOT THINK HE WOULD RECEIVE THAT INFORMATION BEFORE NOVEMBER 7 AND THEREFORE CURRENT SESSION NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL CLOSE ON NOVEMBER 7 AS PRESENTLY SCHEDULED. PRIME MINISTER ADDED THAT HE CAN ALWAYS CONVOKE A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY TO OBTAIN APPROVAL FOR THE AGREEMENTS NEGOTIATED WITH THE LPF ONCE HE HAS LPF MINISTERIAL LIST.

5. COMMENT: FROM THESE CONVERSATIONS IT APPEARS THAT PROSPECTS FOR EARLY FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT ARE RECEDING. WHILE SOUVANNA IS EAGER TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT, IT IS OUT OF QUESTION THAT LPF WILL AGREE TO FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT UNTIL IT HAS THE NUMBER OF TROOPS IT CONSIDERS NECESSARY IN VIENTIANE. FURTHERMORE, LPF ARE ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO HAVING NAMES OF THEIR MINISTERS RATIFIED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THEREFORE WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY MOVEMENT ON FORMING GOVERNMENT UNTIL ASSEMBLY CLOSSES. THE AIR OF OPTIMISM AND ACHIEVEMENT WHICH FILLED VIENTIANE IMMEDIATELY AFTER SIGNING OF SEPTEMBER 14 PROTOCOL HAS GIVEN WAY MOMENTARILY TO A CONFIDENTIAL

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SENSE OF STALEMATE AND UNCERTAINTY. THE BRIGHT SPOT, OF COURSE, REMAINS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CEASE-FIRE WITH HARDLY ANY INCIDENTS REPORTED THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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